

MOVING AROUND

Published for the
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
by Dance/USA
Robert Yesselman, editor



Partnerships at Work in Dance On Tour



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PARTNERSHIPS AT WORK
IN DANCE ON TOUR

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Top Photo: Lynn Aaron and Jeffrey Neeck of Feld Ballets/NY in *Shadow's Breath*, choreography by Eliot Feld. Photo copyright 1989 by Lois Greenfield.

Bottom Photo: Topeka Center for the Arts, Topeka, KS. Photo: Gary Becker.

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MOVING



AROUND

DANCING AND TOURING

BY SALLY BRAYLEY BLISS AND ARTHUR MITCHELL,
MEMBERS, NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

Performing and touring are the lifeblood of dance. For the public to experience the range and vitality of the art form, live dance performance is essential. We can't turn on the radio or television to a dance station or borrow a shelf of dance classics from most local libraries. Even the best dance films and television programs are no substitute for the live experience. Dance On Tour is a living lending library of dance.

The universality of dance and the brilliance of our dance artists and forms have given American dance unmatched prominence. No other country surpasses us in the excellence, vitality and range of our dance—we produce nothing better. Dance is among this country's most successful exports; indeed, the work of our dance artists is often better known abroad than at home. This is ironic, since dance in this country has been an extraordinarily fertile art: the development of the art form, the creation of new works, and the variety of forms, styles and traditions that make up the American dance landscape have no parallel. Touring dance is a moving canvas, a record and history of our time enlivened by the engagement of artists with audiences and communities.

While touring in the United States has been the economic lifeblood of most dance companies, it is fraught with risk. Some things have improved in the decades since pioneer dancers—Anna Pavlova, Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn and Katherine Dunham—crisscrossed this land on America's railroads to bring an appreciation for dance to millions. In those days dancers encountered ignorance and prejudice and were exhausted from grueling tour schedules and uncertain pay days. By and large, theaters were filthy and floors unsuitable for dancing, leading to frequent and serious injuries that had no time to heal. The most pleasurable stops were those hosted by enlightened and excited presenters. If there was time, the dancers taught, lectured and educated.

Though conditions have improved dramatically in many ways, dance touring today has similarities to that of touring in the days of the pioneers. Although many companies must tour to exist, they cannot generate sufficient income to support the essential rehearsal and creative periods necessary to mount a tour. Due to rising costs, many companies now lose money touring. And today, they are expected to do much more than perform and move on to the next stop.

The touring marketplace itself is shrinking as the effects of the difficult economic climate take their toll on presenters' abilities to sell the tickets and raise the additional funds necessary to support dance presentation. Selling

tickets has become more difficult as competition for diminishing leisure time activities increases. And the erosion of arts education in our schools has not prepared the upcoming generation to appreciate the glories of live dance performance. All these factors leave presenters as much at financial risk as artists.

The dozen profiles that follow illustrate the exciting varieties and possibilities for artists and communities that have been helped through the Arts Endowment's Dance On Tour program. Some artists crave unfettered time in a theater to create and rehearse work to be presented later, as in the Trisha Brown Company profile. The Liz Lerman/Dance Exchange and Urban Bush Women profiles illustrate interplay with the community and with non-traditional settings involving populations at risk—children, the incarcerated, caregivers, the aged and infirm—engaged in dance processes that are life-affirming and often healing. Local artists, often experiencing a sense of isolation in their communities, are given opportunities to study and perform with fellow artists from other communities, sharing ideas and exploring new avenues for artistic growth as in the Mark Dendy profile. We see through all these stories that there is no end of possibilities for artists, presenters and communities to engage with each other in ways that nourish and stimulate creativity.

All this takes wise planning, responsive management, an entrepreneurial spirit and the resources equal to the real costs involved. That is why subsidy is imperative.

The National Endowment for the Arts recognized long ago that federal subsidy was needed to bring the best dance of all kinds to people living in all parts of the country. The profiles in this book attest to the creativity and energy and innovation that have made our dance artists and companies the envy of the world. Through Dance On Tour, the art and artists are "moving around," engaging Americans in all walks of life and in many different ways.

The twelve projects you read about here only hint at the almost limitless possibilities when creative artists and equally creative presenters have the resources available to engage, to enlighten and to inspire communities.

DANCE ON TOUR

Almost from its inception, the Arts Endowment has supported dance touring by direct support to dance artists/companies and by nurturing the partnerships between dance artists/companies, presenters, communities and state and, later, regional funding agencies. For over a dozen years, the Dance Touring Program (DTP) and its predecessor programs fueled unprecedented growth in the number of touring dance companies and the breadth of public access to dance nationwide. By 1981, however, the Arts Endowment's budget growth had slowed greatly; funding for DTP could no longer keep pace with demand and rising costs. By 1987, attempts at finding new ways to support the vital partnerships necessary to bring dance to communities throughout the nation had resulted in a patchwork of various state and regional programs that left the partners confused and discouraged.

In 1987, Dance/USA convened a special Task Force in Houston that helped identify components of a more consistent national approach to support for dance touring. Between October 1987 and March 1990, choreographers, dancers and representatives from dance companies, arts presenters, arts service organizations, the state arts agencies, the regional arts agencies and the Arts Endowment conducted more than thirty planning meetings across the country. As a result of these consultations, Dance On Tour was developed to coordinate more effectively public support for dance presenting and touring.

The purpose of Dance On Tour is to strengthen dance and dance audiences in America by bringing exemplary dance to audiences around the country in ways that are responsive to dance companies, presenters and communities.

Dance On Tour is a cooperative effort of the Endowment's Presenting and Commissioning, Dance, and State and Regional Programs. It is administered by the Presenting and Commissioning Program. The category has two components:

- a *state component* to assist projects designed by state arts agencies (see Contacts, page 44) to strengthen the presentation of outstanding out-of-state dance artists/companies, and
- a *regional component*, facilitated by the six regional arts organizations (see Contacts, page 45), to assist the regional arts organizations' support for engagements by exemplary dance artists/companies.

The state component of Dance On Tour is available to all state arts agencies (applying directly to the Arts Endowment) on a competitive basis for projects that address specific issues in the presentation of quality out-of-state dance artists/companies. This component is intended to foster long-term

development of dance presenting in a given state. It is hoped that future dance activity can be nurtured through collaborative planning of tours by the state arts agencies, presenters, dance artists and local communities. The program encourages dance companies to design such projects. These projects are expected to complement, not duplicate, support through the regional component.

The regional component assists the six mainland regional arts organizations to support in-region touring of exemplary dance artists/companies. Presenters apply to their regional arts organizations for fee support for primarily multi-day engagements by exemplary out-of-state touring dance companies. All six regions have a common deadline, use the same guidelines and application forms and assemble panels using a mix of in-region and out-of-region presenters and dance artists. Presenters and dance artists/companies are encouraged to work together to develop effective systems for fee support.

Dance On Tour's dance, presenting and funding partners envisioned a program that would help outstanding dance artists/companies tour regularly and reliably across the United States. This two part structure of state and regional support brings a national framework and consistency to funding for dance touring. With Dance On Tour:

- dance companies can reach audiences in a wide range of communities, performing current repertory, teaching and cultivating fresh expressions and experiences of dance;
- the work of a broad spectrum of outstanding dance artists exemplifying the country's rich diversity of cultural and aesthetic traditions can be seen across the country;
- extended dance engagements can be planned, providing more meaningful community involvement, less exhausting travel schedules and better performance environments for artists; and
- presenters of various sizes and cultural perspectives in all parts of the country can enhance their capacity to present dance effectively.

It is hoped that Dance On Tour can leverage new funds from both the public and private sectors, building a strong, diversified economic infrastructure for dance touring.

Dance On Tour is a collaboration made dynamic by the artists it supports, the communities in which they perform and the presenting organizations that invest in its success. In the last two years, the state component of Dance On Tour assisted 25 development projects in 18 states involving 20 different dance artists/companies. In the regional component, fee support for the 1992-93 season was awarded to 230 presenters across the country making possible over 400 engagements. The dozen examples of Dance On Tour's success described here have one major element in common: all speak to the positive impact of close partnership among dance artists, presenters and funders. All have advanced the goal of engaging communities across America with the nation's finest dance artists.

MOVING



AROUND

“AT THE CENTER OF THIS— THE LOVE OF BEAUTY.”

WHO

Feld Ballets/NY

Wisconsin
Arts Board

Various Presenters

WHAT

3 1/2-week Statewide
Residency

WHEN

September, 1991

WHERE

Various Sites,
Wisconsin

DOT Funds

\$30,000
(state component)

\$44,000
(regional component)

“Everybody has this sort of meaningful conversation about outreach and multiculturalism, which are buzzwords that we hold very deeply. But to my mind there is only one thing at the center of this—the love of beauty.” No one can accuse Wisconsin’s Philip Procter of sponsoring the state’s Dance On Tour (DOT) project with choreographer Eliot Feld for the wrong reasons. To hear the presenter tell it, this was a burning case of art for art’s sake.

“Yes, there was just this manic love for his work that was the energy that got the project going,” continues Philip Procter, executive director of Milwaukee’s Pabst Theater, which served as fiscal agent for the Feld Ballets/NY three-and-a-half-week residency. “I think in any project there’s a crazy point where somebody just says, ‘I want to do this,’ and that’s it. The planning, plotting and fundraising can be figured out once that first dynamic energy, that first idea, is in place.”

Procter’s commitment to Feld’s work dates back to the late 1970s when he caught his first full evening of the New York choreographer’s ballets at Royce Hall in Los Angeles. “The minute I saw the first dance, I knew exactly what this was about,” says Procter. “I felt the same the first time I saw Judith Jamison step onstage with the Ailey company. What can you say? I just knew this was a company I would never forget.”

Some 15 years later, Procter dreamed of bringing the Feld company to the Pabst, but the 20-member company was

too expensive. So he began searching for other presenters to help foot the bill. Hearing of his dilemma, Gretchen Thomson, then community arts development coordinator of the Wisconsin Arts Board, suggested Dance On Tour as a possible source of funding. Together with Procter and Feld Ballets’ booking manager Eugene Lowery, Thomson proposed a statewide collaborative venture in which some ten presenting organizations in eight cities would share costs—with contributions ranging from \$4,500 for a performance and one outreach activity in the small town of Oshkosh, to \$20,000 for two performances and three outreach activities in a large hall in Madison. Ultimately, the remainder was covered through a \$30,000 grant from DOT, a \$44,000 regional DOT grant from Arts Midwest, a matching grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board, and sizeable contributions from a number of corporations including \$55,000 from Wisconsin Bell, the designated “statewide sponsor.”

“It was certainly a bigger price tag than we had ever met before,” says Thomson, who believes the project would have folded without the Dance On Tour seed money. “There were probably not more than one or two presenters in the state who could afford this company as a single event. Even with block-booking, I don’t think we could have come up with aggregate funds to have done this.”

The resultant residency featured an assortment of outreach activities, from workshops with professional dancers in Milwaukee to lecture-demonstra-

Feld Ballets/NY

Wisconsin
Arts Board

Various Presenters

tions for the children of Eau Claire. Feld is well-known for his school programs in New York City, and the Milwaukee Ballet School took advantage of his presence to discuss the possibility of replicating that program in Wisconsin.

But, like Procter, audiences seemed most energized by the troupe's evening performances where Feld's distinctive vision of contemporary American ballet was on display. In particular, the world premiere of *Endsong*, considered by many critics to be Feld's finest work to date, constituted its own kind of outreach, suggests Procter. "I would love to bring people to the art, and not always feel that we have to bring it and drop it in their laps," he says. "I want to see them energized to put in the effort to go and see it. It is one of my biggest problems with school programs, putting them passively on the bus or bringing the artists to school, where they're captive. I'd like them to seek art out."

For that reason, Procter hopes that the presenting program will expand to allow more performances in far-flung locales around Wisconsin, so that more citizens of the state can experience professional dance firsthand. Thomson reports that 13 communities are participating in Wisconsin's 1992-93



Lynn Aaron of Feld Ballets/NY in *Endsong*. Choreography: Eliot Feld; Photo: Lois Greenfield.

Dance On Tour with the David Parsons Dance Company, and another 16 have expressed interest in the following year's DOT tour by Ballet Hispanico of New York.

"Hopefully presenters in other cities will see the possibility of doing something more than one dance company a year," says Procter. "Maybe they'll do two, three or four companies, so that their audiences can see dance on a regular basis and fall in love with it." Just like Procter did with Feld.

—David Gere

“IS THERE ANY WAY WE CAN GET THEM TO STAY LONGER?”

New Mexico is a big state with a small population; finding ways to develop successful dance residencies which draw substantial audiences takes ingenuity. Fortunately, New Mexico had Ian Rosenkranz and Beth Bradley as project consultants for the 21-day statewide Dance On Tour (DOT) residency with a total cost of \$66,228. It was equally fortunate in drawing artistic director Toni Pimble, executive director Riley Grannan and their Eugene Ballet Company from Oregon for the 1992 residency. The company spent time in four primary sites—Farmington, Taos, Raton and Silver City—as well as visiting satellite locations such as Albuquerque, Santa Fe and a Navajo community to provide special services.

The residency was designed to provide professional development and technical assistance for small and less experienced presenters in order to develop a wider network of presenters committed to presenting dance. In this way, the art form can continue to tour New Mexico. Rosenkranz and Bradley led a team of more than 25 people in participating communities with whom they communicated regularly; these people in turn had responsibilities in the local communities, working with schools, senior centers and other groups, said Rosenkranz. “When we first visited [each potential site], we targeted everyone who might remotely have some interest in dance. First Beth and I asked questions: ‘Do you have a group of differently-abled adults? Den mothers?

Cheerleaders? Drill team?’ These people were called to meetings; they had no idea why. We’d show them videos, explain what services a dance company could provide in their community.”

On the second visit, the residency design team planned specific activities. They brought along Grannan, a gifted dance teacher in his own right. Bradley, herself a former dancer, brought to the planning process her understanding of what the company could conceivably accomplish in a single day.

The residency design team structured the dancers’ time, dividing the company into small platoons so more territory could be covered simultaneously. A community volunteer traveled with each small group. When they weren’t teaching or performing, they were on the road; Easter Day was spent covering the 216 miles from Taos to Farmington; the following Sunday they drove 378 miles from Farmington to Silver City.

The visiting performers gave generously of their time and energy, and left feeling that they, too, had been educated.

New Mexico is a place people are curious about and eager to visit. “That factor means a company can enjoy their time here even though we work them to the bone,” laughs Rosenkranz.

The Eugene Ballet performed *Children of the Raven*, a signature piece in their repertory. The dance is based on legends of people native to the Pacific Northwest coast. Among the residency

WHO

Eugene Ballet
Company
New Mexico
Arts Division
Various Presenters

WHAT

Performance/
Outreach Residency

WHEN

March–April, 1992

WHERE

Various sites,
New Mexico

DOT Funds

\$25,000

Eugene Ballet
Company

New Mexico
Arts Division

Various Presenters

sites were several Native American communities. The Eugene contingent included a Native American storyteller who shared his knowledge, most of it completely unfamiliar to the New Mexicans, at workshops in schools and communities. But when they contacted the Navajo Teen Life Center, their liaison said she really wanted to explore classical and contemporary works. "The kids out there," says Rosenkranz, "have no exposure to classical and contemporary forms."

The New Mexico project allowed Eugene Ballet members to interact with people from other cultures. Everyone in a given town knew they were there. "We had over 110 activities going on, serving over 16,000 persons; in rural New Mexico, that's a lot," observes Rosenkranz, who's based in Ojo de la Bacca, outside of Santa Fe. "The largest community has 22,000 people."

In addition to the four full company performances, the company offered lecture-demonstrations in schools, stretch classes for athletes and for senior citizens, consultations with high school drill teams, movement-for-actors classes to choral societies and a talk about career options in dance, other than performing, at the Navajo high school. "We scheduled open forums with the dancers to talk about careers in the arts," says Rosenkranz. "The kids have no exposure to that, don't realize that for every performer, there are 20 people behind the scenes."

Among other things, they offered partnering classes to the Buen Viaje

Dancers, an ensemble of eight learning-disabled adults, some with Down's syndrome, some with cerebral palsy, "and one," commented Grannan, "who's merely blind. They're able to do disarmingly simple work. You have to get down to dance's very fundamental thing, use it as a means of communicating simple messages. Their concerns have to do with basic feelings: how people treat one another." The director of Buen Viaje spent hours with Grannan, teaching him how to work with these very special performers.

The greatest satisfaction for Rosenkranz came from the transformed attitudes of the presenters with whom he worked. At early meetings, the standard question from presenters and community members alike was "What are we going to do with a dance company for five days?" Once the residency was in progress, however, the cry changed to "Is there any way we can get them to stay longer?"

"That's how we judge our success," notes Rosenkranz, who is revving up to tour Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, an African-American company, in the next DOT cycle. "It means the presenter doesn't have to re-invent the wheel. In all four communities, we're using Dance On Tour as a model, showing presenters that there's a hunger for arts activities. Everyone is convinced that extended residencies are the way to go. Presenters can now bring in artists from any medium and plug them into our network. In Raton, a small coal mining

Eugene Ballet
Company
New Mexico
Arts Division
Various Presenters

community, they do a series with several different artists each year. The DOT project was their first attempt at a multi-day residency with a large dance company. In the coming year, the presenter intends to bring every artist in their series into the community for an extended residency. In Farmington, they've started a children's series, so that over the course of the year, every student will have some form of exposure to the performing arts—a direct result of the DOT project. It's been an organic process; we're pushing it and it's pulling us. We were able to bring DOT into the day school at the Taos Pueblo, and bring the kids down to the city auditorium. It sounds like a simple process, but it's not."

Rosenkranz continues, "You find the dance company on the front page of the small town newspaper, a ballerina demonstrating stretch to a football player. It shows these folks that artists are people. And then there are the



Mark Lia of Eugene Ballet in *Children of the Raven*.
Choreography: Toni Pimble; Photo: Cliff Coles

professional skills the presenters are getting, writing WESTAF [Western State Arts Federation] and state arts council grants. Now they want to write Meet the Composer Grants and commission new pieces. We think that's light years of progress."

—Elizabeth Zimmer

“PEOPLE WALKED OUT WITH TEARS IN THEIR EYES.”

WHO

David Rousseve/Reality

Arts Midwest

Dance Center of
Columbia College
Chicago

WHAT

Performance/
Outreach Residency

WHEN

September, 1992

WHERE

Various sites,
Chicago, Illinois

DOT Funds

\$10,960

Audiences in Chicago, says Woodie White, “are among the most diverse in the country—African-Americans, Asian Americans and Latinos. David Rousseve was able to spend a significant amount of time reaching out to these and other communities. He relates to people in an honest manner. His work addresses important themes in our society, in astonishing ways.”

White is the executive director at the Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago; David Rousseve is the choreographer/writer and central performer of *Urban Scenes/Creole Dreams*, a dance-theater project he had been developing for several years and completed during his four-week Dance On Tour (DOT) residency in Chicago. The work explores the many ways people intimidate and oppress one another—racially, economically and in terms of gender and sexual orientation. In the course of the piece, several of the male dancers bare their bodies as well as their souls. The project premiered at two well-attended performances at the recently renovated Blackstone Theater.

An openly gay African-American artist, native to Houston with Creole roots, Rousseve thrived in Chicago. Collaborating with White, Shirley Mordine (artistic director at the Dance Center), and Susan Lipman (executive director of Performing Arts Chicago), Rousseve was able, he said, to reach out to a vast and various group of people. “They really listened to what we were telling them about the piece and how it should be marketed—that its issues are political as well as spiritual.”

Sue Latham, Rousseve’s producer in New York, did the planning in tight com-

munication with Chicago. Julie Simpson, a Chicago manager, was put in charge of day-to-day operations. Woodie White made extraordinary efforts to build understanding of the potentially controversial piece and to build audiences. He arranged outreach events at the Harold Washington Library in Chicago’s inner city, at a gay community center and at various churches. Master classes were held in the community. One of Rousseve’s dancers, Aziza, taught a combination of hip-hop and modern dance technique three days a week for four weeks, to high-school-age kids from public housing who *wanted* to be there. “Aziza lives in Harlem,” says Rousseve, “and African-American pride is a big part of her personal agenda.”

He continues, “The bottom line, artistically speaking? The Chicago residency had a profound effect on the piece. You can’t focus in your home town the way you can in another city. When you’re out-of-town you have the dancers’ undivided attention for four weeks; you can rehearse eight hours a day instead of two. They don’t have to teach or go to work as waitresses. I’m convinced that the piece, [co-commissioned by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis] which was performed in the Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in mid-November would not have been such a success without Chicago. To get it up on stage and see what it looked like made a profound difference.”

“What at first appeared as overwhelming,” says Rousseve, “became, by the end, a great system. It was the first time that community outreach became really ful-

David Rousseve/Reality

Arts Midwest

Dance Center of
Columbia College
Chicago

filling for us. Audiences knew what to expect when they came. It even was more valuable for me than for the audience. We decided to reach out to church-going African-American people and have 'informances,' and to ask them what they saw."

It was the first time, says Rousseve, that "any producer out-of-town has had the time, money and resources to make us the centerpiece of a lot of different things. We recruited six dancers locally; Woodie took a lot of time finding them. They had the ability to invest a lot of time and energy in the piece. And my dancers were completely giving; we kept saying 'Can we do more? You're taking us to an African-American cultural center in the middle of the projects? Great!!' The outreach was a pleasure rather than a chore."

For the final performances, about 1,000 people a night filled the Blackstone Theater: gay, straight, young, old, black, white, the most diverse audience Rousseve had ever seen for experimental work. The presenters arranged a series discount for purchasers of tickets to another attraction, a performance by Sweet Honey in the Rock, one of whose members composed original gospel music for Rousseve's piece. The result was a crossover audience, "an incredible crowd of people."

Chicago is a major center for gospel music; Susan Lipman recruited the Faith Tabernacle Choir to perform in Rousseve's work and in the process attracted hundreds of church-going African-Americans who had never be-



Aziza of David Rousseve/Reality in a lecture-demonstration. Photo: Bob Kusel

fore visited the theater. She speaks of the euphoria that the partners felt in this collaboration. "David was willing to meet with key people in the media. He wants something we want: to create artistic work that has social content, that is not abstract. Chicago remains one of the most segregated cities in the United States. He was able to bring together white audiences and black audiences, and make both of them stretch. You're talking about church as source; it's very difficult to go to that audience and introduce them to nudity. It was extremely subtle. Nothing was forced on anyone. We were all in agreement; we all supported what was going on. People walked out of that theater with tears in their eyes."

—Elizabeth Zimmer

“WE WERE ZEALOTS. WE WERE IN A HURRY BECAUSE WE WERE SO TERRIFIED OF LOSING PEOPLE.”

Only a handful of art forms can genuinely be labeled American. Musical theater is one. Modern dance is another. Jazz is a third.

And then there's tap dancing, a melding of African rhythms and Irish step dancing that has, over the course of the last 50 years, gone from being the most popular dance form in the land to becoming practically an endangered species.

Like the bald eagle, however, tap has been experiencing a resurgence, partly on account of the African-American artists who have maintained their artistic traditions at an extremely high level, and partly due to the efforts of presenters like Colorado's Marda Kirn, who has worked tirelessly to keep the art form from disappearing—with the assistance of funding from Dance On Tour (DOT).

“Tap dancing has never been as popular as it is today,” said famed tapper Charles “Honi” Coles at the “Fascinating Rhythms” conference that ran concurrently with the 1992 Colorado Dance Festival. “It seems to finally have been placed on a higher level, with respect. It's a good feeling.”

Kirn, artistic director of the Boulder-based festival, was introduced to tap in 1982 when she presented the Los Angeles-based Jazz Tap Ensemble, the first tap company on the national dance scene. “I loved what they were doing with rhythm. It really opened my ears to what was possible,” says Kirn, a self-confessed ballet “bunhead” who, nonetheless, was open to forms beyond ballet. So when Sali Ann Kriegsman—a dance critic and presenter who later became director of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Dance Program—shared with Kirn her fears that

tap was “in danger of being lost for lack of understanding,” Kirn jumped into the fray, volunteering to present a Colorado tap festival. “We were zealots,” says Kirn with a laugh. “We were in a hurry because we were so terrified of losing people.”

For good reason. That first year, 1986, the event featured two master artists who are no longer with us: Steve Condos, an electrifying improviser who died suddenly (with his tap shoes on) in 1990, and Coles, the granddaddy of modern tap who passed on in late 1992. “There was tremendous suspicion among the older generation, because they had been ripped-off so often by the movie industry and producers,” explains Kirn, who says she was able to win the artists' trust largely because of Kriegsman's hard-won contacts. “And there was professional jealousy, because the scraps were so few, and the jobs so rare. So that first festival in 1986 was really historic.”

Historic for two reasons: not only were some of the greatest tap dancers of the 1930s, '40s and '50s present in the flesh, including legends Jimmy Slyde and Eddie Brown in addition to Condos and Coles, but strong evidence was emerging to indicate that tap was adapting and would survive into the next century. Gregory Hines, the rising star of the young generation, was showcased in that first festival, and two weeks of intensive studio training provided a bridge to the future for young adherents of the form.

“The thing about dancing is that it's really body to body, mind to mind,” says Kirn, stressing the need for young dancers to learn in the studio directly from the masters. “Right from the start, I was

WHO

Colorado Dance Festival

Western States Arts
Federation

WHAT

“A Tribute to Tap” (The
Great Tap Reunion)

WHEN

July, 1992

WHERE

Various sites, Boulder,
Colorado

DOT Funds

\$22,926

adamant about including a training component."

That need was addressed most directly in the 1992 festival, the fifth since 1986, which featured a two-week "tap conservatory" designed and curated by Lynn Dalley of Los Angeles' Jazz Tap Ensemble and Brenda Bufalino of New York's American Tap Dance Orchestra. Some 170 dancers from ten countries participated in classes taught by veteran artists like Cholly Atkins and Eddie Brown, with supplementary sessions featuring second and third generation dancers like Bufalino, Sam Weber and physical comedian Bill Irwin. The training climaxed in "The Rising Stars of Tap," a joyous student concert featuring modern interpretations of styles ranging from softshoe to the Charleston, topped off by an impressive solo performance by young prodigy Baakari Wilder. A Dance On Tour grant in the amount of \$22,926 was provided through the Western States Arts Federation toward the total budget of \$191,280.

"There are some whiz kids coming up now," says Kirn, clearly buoyed by signs of tap's rebirth as seen in the faces and feet of these young students. "Some have flying feet, and some, like Baakari, are dancing with wisdom, too."

Other highlights of the 1992 festival included talks and film showings on the history of tap, with a notably inspired lecture by scholar Sally Sommer; nightly performances featuring greats like Slyde, accompanied by his whisper-shoed protege Sarah Petronio; and ample opportunity for informal learning in university hallways and theater foyers.



Jimmy Slyde and Sarah Petronio. Photo: Peter Petronio

History and practice coincided most fittingly in a trio of "heritage" lectures by Coles, who also helped curate the three evening concerts and served, with former partner Atkins, as master of ceremonies at the final presentation—where he received a spontaneous standing ovation without even dancing a step. Coles died four months later at the age of 81, leaving festival-goers grateful to have heard his firsthand reminiscences about tap's glory days and to have witnessed him soaking up the audience's applause and adulation.

"It's sort of like spreading the gospel," says Kirn of the ongoing Colorado tap project. "We have this amazing American treasure: it's here, it's alive and it's fragile, but it's extraordinary."

—David Gere

“THE PROJECT WAS A CATALYST FOR COLLABORATIONS.”

WHO

Cleo Parker Robinson
Dance Ensemble

Mark Dendy and
Dendy Dance

North Carolina Arts
Council

WHAT

Performance/Outreach
Residency (Robinson)

Performance/Outreach/
Creative Residency
(Dendy)

WHEN

February, 1992
(Robinson)

April, 1992
(Dendy)

WHERE

Various sites, North
Carolina

DOT Funds

\$25,000

The focus of the North Carolina Arts Council's 1991-92 Dance On Tour (DOT) Project was twofold: to create organizational partnerships between presenters and community groups, and provide technical assistance and support to less established dance presenters (using the artistic and team-building skills of Cleo Parker Robinson and her Denver-based Dance Ensemble); and to provide an artistic resource for North Carolina's dance companies (in the person of North Carolina native Mark Dendy, who now lives in New York where he directs Dendy Dance). In both cases, an important objective was audience development.

"When I came to the North Carolina Arts Council [as touring and presenting director] in 1989," says Pamela Martin Green, "the cultural diversity work was just getting going. I decided to try and do something with a black dance company that would address communities of color. A lot of the mainstream presenters were complaining about not being able to get black folks in to see their performances. My idea was to get the two together to satisfy each other's needs—to partner the presenters with local community organizations of color.

"We did the Robinson project in six locations—Asheville, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, Charlotte, Chapel Hill and Pembroke—in four weeks. I think it was incredible for the communities, and very, very hard for the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble. I don't know of another company that would have been willing to do what they did."

What they did was appear in six communities, performing repertory including

Spiritual Suite, a contemporary work to gospel music. For this piece, they incorporated local dancers in each place. "We'd audition in each city, rehearse and do a costumed performance—all in four days," laughed Robinson. In a couple of locales, they recruited and rehearsed live gospel choirs as well. The company also offered master classes and lecture demonstrations at each site.

"We spent a lot of our money on planning. We brought Cleo in from Denver three times before the residency actually took place," says Green. "I required all the partners to attend. It gave a sense of unity to the tour. Everybody got to know each other. The state arts council created a promotional package to go along with the tour: a poster, a public service announcement. We commissioned feature stories from a writer and sent all the partners as much as they wanted of that material. We also provided technical support. If places didn't have enough expertise, we hired freelance lighting and sound people to go in."

Overall, Green estimates, the *Spiritual Suite* project reached 10,000 to 12,000 people, 53% of them minority, in the six communities involved.

The Robinson project had its start at the American Dance Festival, where the North Carolina presenters were meeting. Robinson began brainstorming with them about what each community could offer. "They were able to find out more about each other, and to network in ways they hadn't before," she said. "The project was a catalyst for collaborations. If they were tentative about the makeup of their own community, they could get support from

the experiences of other regional presenters who had worked successfully with local community groups."

Mark Dendy is a native of Weaverville, NC, who has emerged in New York as a choreographer and company director. His work flirts with outrageousness, often includes nudity and engages contemporary social issues such as the AIDS crisis. A graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts, he speaks enthusiastically of his training and of the opportunities the DOT project offered: "It was very rewarding to go back and work in the place that spawned me." His connections to the companies with whom he collaborated on the project go back a decade or more; he held his first meeting with a potential presenter a year before the project officially began. "Quite a few of them were put off by my aesthetic," he muses. "The people who chose me knew me personally and knew my work."

Dendy worked with companies in Raleigh, Asheville and New Bern. On circa 1990, a Raleigh-based dance ensemble, he set a new work, *Lore*, which had its premiere as part of a split bill shared with his own company at the North Carolina State University and in Charlotte at Spirit Square. Dendy himself performed with circa 1990 in *Lore*, which was developed from his own family's music and rituals—funerals, storytelling and dance. "My Aunt Jesse was the focal point of the piece," he observed.

In Asheville, Dendy set a piece called *Overheard* on Wall Street Dance. He set *Beat*, perhaps his signature work, on Atlantic Dance Theatre in New Bern. "It's



Mark Dendy in *Back Back*. Photo ©Lois Greenfield

their favorite piece now, popular in all their outreach work."

He gave master classes to different age groups at local high schools, talked to them about modern dance and challenged them physically. Between his DOT engagements and other commitments, Dendy spent almost 27 weeks in North Carolina during the residency year, enabling a lot of planning at very little cost to the program.

Green observes that the \$25,000 contribution of DOT to the \$56,345 total project cost of the residency helped generate more than four times that amount for the companies. "The ripple effect of those funds is hard to describe. We really made that money go far, hired a lot of artists. It went back into the communities." Both Dendy and Robinson were the best kind of catalyst.

—Elizabeth Zimmer

Cleo Parker Robinson
Dance Ensemble

Mark Dendy and
Dendy Dance

North Carolina Arts
Council

“EVERY KID NEEDS SOMEONE TO LOOK UP TO.”

WHO

Urban Bush Women

Mid-America

Arts Alliance

Center for Women

& Their Work

WHAT

Performance/

Outreach Residency

WHEN

May, 1992

WHERE

Various sites,

Austin, Texas

DOT Funds

\$3,160

When Ric Garcia, the theater director at Austin's Johnston High School, turned on the follow spot in the school's theater, he thought he was preparing for a typical schooltime performance. But within minutes, he knew that New York's Urban Bush Women were anything but typical.

"They took participants from the audience and asked them to demonstrate the dances they grew up with," recalls Garcia, who brought up the houselights when he saw the group's eight members interacting avidly with the students in the audience. "Some showed games like hopscotch or patty-cake while others did rap numbers," says Garcia. "And after that, the company explained how they had developed similar material into their own performance."

Sixty minutes later, at the climax of an event that grew to feel like a "revival meeting," says Garcia, the capacity audience of 360 white, black and Hispanic students jumped to their feet and cheered.

The idea that art can be created from personal experience—that it need not be intellectually distant or inapproachable—is a central tenet of Urban Bush Women's philosophy, a philosophy the company has been able to pass on all over the country through programs funded in part by Dance On Tour. In performance pieces that blend stories, games, songs and memories, artistic director Jawole Willa Jo Zollar adamantly affirms her own African-American heritage, even as she and her predominantly female company serve as role models for African-American kids.

"They are very interested in being role models, in showing kids that being an artist or dancer is something admirable and something to aspire to," says Chris Cowden, the executive director of the Center for Women & Their Work, the group's Austin presenter. "That's very central to what they do, so that makes their appearance in schools a very good fit."

And a good fit for Women & Their Work, too, an organization whose mission is to encourage "art as a profession"—especially for women.

Cowden, who first presented Urban Bush Women in 1989, brought the group back as the centerpiece of "Beyond Borders," a series designed to showcase a wide range of culturally defined aesthetics. Accordingly, Cowden and her racially diverse board made special efforts to reach out to the African-American community in Austin, which makes up approximately 12% of the city's half-million population.

"You have to market differently to different communities," explains Cowden, who says she has learned a lot about attracting black audiences through years of building cross-cultural alliances. "It's important to go through churches, through social groups, sororities and fraternities—which have a different meaning in the black community than they do in the white community." Black-oriented media can play an important role too, she says. Zollar, for instance, was interviewed on the local African-American radio station, and advertisements were placed in the black newspaper and other media that di-

rectly served the African-American population. The connections paid off.

"The phone started ringing on Monday and we got 500 calls that week," says Cowden, whose small office staff was unprepared for the onslaught. With ticket revenue from two sold-out performances, a grant of \$3,160 from Dance On Tour through the Mid-America Arts Alliance and additional funds from the National Performance Network, the National Endowment for the Arts and the City of Austin, Women & Their Work was able to break even on its budget of \$15,238.

"To call it a financial success would be kind of misleading," says Cowden with a chuckle, explaining that substantial in-kind donations and administrative costs are not included in this figure. "But we always look at the impact on Austin as the measure of success."

For that, one must look again at Johnston High School which includes a sizeable African-American population. Except for the 400 students who attend the magnet Liberal Arts Academy housed there, the majority of the school's 1,700 pupils come from single-parent homes in two of the poorest areas in Austin. More than half of the students at Urban Bush Women's lecture-demonstration were black, clearly hungry for the rare opportunity to witness their heritage being explored and validated.

"We're seven strong women and one man, we wear our hair natural, we talk



Urban Bush Women in *Heat*. Choreography: Jawole Willa Jo Zollar; Photo: Johan Elbers

about the things we believe in—I do think it has a powerful effect," says Zollar.

Garcia, a Mexican-American, knows from personal experience what it's like to go through school without teachers of one's own ethnicity. "Even here, where we're dealing with 75% minority students, the teachers are mostly anglo," he explains, "so exposure to African-American culture is not near at hand—unless you travel to New York, Chicago or Los Angeles. These kids are robbed of that. So when this troupe comes to town, they are definitely playing role models." Every kid needs someone to look up to.

—David Gere

“WE’VE COME TO TAKE SERIOUSLY OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK TO ARTISTS.”

WHO

Trisha Brown
Company

New England
Foundation for
the Arts

Flynn Theatre

WHAT

Creative Residency

WHEN

Residency
August–September,
1992

Performance
February, 1993

WHERE

Burlington, Vermont

DOT Funds

\$6,000

Over the last several years, New York-based choreographer Trisha Brown has been conceiving new dances which, because of their increasing scale and complexity, require development in a proscenium theater. Making them in a cramped studio and seeing them performed on stage for the first time only days before a premiere had become unacceptable. Work looks different from the 15th row of an auditorium, she knows, than it does when you’re right on top of it. But theaters are expensive to open and run. As well, Brown and her dancers were eager to open a school through which they could disseminate her technical innovations. They had received an Arts Endowment Challenge grant to explore some options. “We figured there had to be presenters with facilities but without the money for residencies of at least four weeks,” commented Brown’s executive director, Susan Fait-Meyers.

The well-equipped, 1,453-seat Flynn Theatre in downtown Burlington had been unused during July and August every year; during the short northern Vermont summer, people spend as much time outdoors as possible. The Flynn’s director of programming, Philip Bither, wanted to keep the building in use without extending the performance season or his budget. He had met Fait-Meyers in the early developmental days of the Dance On Tour program at a presenters’ conference in Maryland. Bither and Brown’s manager developed a residency plan which met all of their needs. Sup-

ported by the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA), they found a way for Brown’s ensemble to have that rarest commodity: weeks of relaxed residency in a bucolic spot, the best possible environment for the development of new dance. The only question remaining was how to involve the Vermont community. They decided to concentrate outreach activities on one long weekend, so that the Vermonters wouldn’t have to forgo the outdoor summer activities they craved, and the Brown company could focus uninterrupted time on their own work.

A different company member taught a master class each Tuesday night during the three-week residency; between 20 and 30 people attended each session. Early in the residency Brown presented a lecture-demonstration in which she explored, in public, the movement problems she was investigating with her dancers. During the open weekend, called “Evolution of an Artist,” Brown hosted more than 200 people. She talked about her work; offered a company demonstration of her major themes from the past two decades and of the piece she was developing at the Flynn; opened her rehearsal to the public; screened a series of videotapes of earlier works in a downstairs space; and held a “meet the artist” discussion. Interested visitors could view both process and product, as well as spend social time meeting and talking with Brown and her dancers.

All activities other than master classes were free; full concerts featuring the work developed during the

Trisha Brown
Company

New England
Foundation for
the Arts

Flynn Theatre

residency were scheduled for late February, 1993. The "open-weekend" attracted local participants as well as visitors from as far away as Montreal, Brooklyn, Ohio and Boston. About 400 community people participated in the residency in one way or another. An ideal balance was struck between the company's need to cloister itself and create new work, and the community's desire for opportunities to study and to observe.

"Often a residency is about catering to the audience's needs," noted Fait-Meyers. "Here, the center was taking care of the artist's and the company's needs; the audience responded strongly to that. Partly, it was because Burlington is an aware, progressive, inquisitive community."

"We struck the right balance between allowing enough time for the Trisha Brown Company to be on its own, and for it to give something back," said Bither. "One of the final events was an informal discussion on dance/music collaborations. We invited all the local composers, many of whom collaborate with area dancers. It turned into a wonderful talk, discussions about artists' approach to music, the various ways to go about working and the power relationships between choreographers and composers. It really gave the local people a window into Trisha's thinking: how music functions for her. The discussion opened the event up beyond the dance community."

Bither and his staff found housing for Trisha and the dancers in private homes, rented bicycles, commandeered vans. The bulk of the Flynn's contri-



Brown Company members in *Set and Reset*. Choreography: Trisha Brown; Photo: Mark Hanauer

bution to the residency was in-kind services: the use of the theater, its staff and equipment and the work of rounding up donated housing and other services. The kind cooperation of IATSE, the stagehands' union at the Flynn, allowed work to continue in the theater throughout the project. Bither, said Brown company manager Cathy Einhorn, "was so sensitive to the way we wanted to work. It was a balancing act between what he needed and allowing the company to have as much latitude as possible."

"We were able to do a terrific two-day photo shoot on the Flynn stage," observed Fait-Meyers. "If we hadn't done it there we'd have had to rent a theater."

One of the outcomes of the residency was to create a climate in which the company and the theater felt com-

Trisha Brown
Company

New England
Foundation for
the Arts

Flynn Theatre

fortable in brainstorming possible joint projects for the future. "On the last day we were there," continued Fait-Meyers, "we had a fabulous hour fantasizing. The stage is a little narrow; they're talking about enlarging it. There's a space behind the theater, an old factory building that they'd like to bring under the umbrella of a capital campaign. We discussed a time share, various models of dealing with real estate, co-op agreements, partnerships. It's really empowering and helpful to have this conversation with potential partners, so that ideas resonate in terms of what their needs re-

ally are, rather than evolving something in a vacuum and taking it out into the presenting world where it doesn't fit."

"We proved at the Flynn that such residencies can be made to work," commented Rebecca Blunk of NEFA. "It's a model program that I hope gets replicated. There are a lot of spaces that could be made available with minimal staffing and utilities. Colleges and universities have beautiful spaces, but there needs to be a cooperative staff, and a program that allows for these exchanges."

—Elizabeth Zimmer

‘JUST LIKE THERE ARE 200,000 ‘NUTCRACKERS’ THE WORLD, THERE SHOULD BE 200,000 ‘RAINBOWS.’”

WHO

Dayton Contemporary
Dance Company

Southern Arts
Federation

American Dance
Festival (ADF)

WHAT

Residency as part of
ADF's "Black
Traditions in American
Modern Dance"

WHEN

June, 1992

WHERE

Durham,
North Carolina

DOT Funds

\$6,820

On the cusp of its 25th anniversary, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company is on an uphill climb toward national recognition. And to the surprise of many in the New York-centered dance world, this feisty company right out of the industrial Midwest is actually getting it. The reason for the troupe's success? Far-reaching touring opportunities facilitated, in part, by Dance On Tour (DOT).

"We started touring in 1972 when we were part of the National Association of Regional Ballet Companies," says Jeraldyn Blunden, founder and artistic director of Dayton's African-American-oriented dance troupe. "But basically we were just touring to people that I knew. If someone requested a performance, we went, but we didn't go out looking for it."

Those were the old days. Through Dance On Tour and a novel touring program sponsored by the American Dance Festival (ADF), the company's visibility has increased exponentially, says Blunden. In 1991-92, Dayton Contemporary visited 12 venues, including an extensive network of theaters in California. "We had never traveled west of Illinois before," says Blunden. And for 1992-93, 18 venues are already lined up. New DOT projects include a two-week residency in North Carolina, where the American Dance Festival is based, and three weeks in New Mexico, which has never hosted an African-American modern dance residency before.

"Over a three-year period, we will have worked with 40 presenters," says Art Waber, ADF operations manager

who also books Dayton's tours. "All of our sites have applied to their regional consortium groups to bring in DOT money. If we didn't have the DOT support, we wouldn't be able to tour the company."

The company's unusually close association with ADF, which has facilitated its recent meteoric growth in reputation, dates back to 1987 and the establishment of a three-year initiative to heighten awareness of the African-American contribution to modern dance. Under the auspices of that project, "Black Traditions in American Modern Dance," Dayton Contemporary joined four other predominantly black companies in presenting reconstructions of classic works by such seminal choreographers as Donald McKayle, Pearl Primus and Talley Beatty. Dayton was handpicked by the choreographers to perform eight of the fourteen reconstructed works, including McKayle's *Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder*, a highly acclaimed work choreographed in 1959.

During those three years, all premiere performances took place at the Dance Festival, with subsequent mini-tours to as many as ten traditionally black colleges around North Carolina so that students and members of the community could learn more about their dance heritage. To bolster that cause, ADF packed the program with lecture-demonstrations, panels with dance historians and discussions with the choreographers. "We offered a wonderful audience-building, context-building package," says Waber. "If you went through

Dayton
Contemporary
Dance Company

Southern Arts
Federation

American Dance
Festival

the whole process, you learned a lot about African-American modern dance."

Meanwhile, Dayton Contemporary learned a lot about successful touring, which led to the company being chosen by ADF to spearhead an extended project pairing the company's performances with scholarly humanities symposia funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund was the major contributor to the overall effort. "We felt that the company was on the verge of making a national move," says Waber, who now oversees the intersection of the Dance Festival, the humanities symposia and Dayton's performances. "It's been a tremendous challenge for them administratively, to go from being a regional company to a national company, but it's time for them to move up," says Waber.

Blunden seems faintly surprised that so much attention is swaying toward an African-American company that came up from such "meager beginnings."

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Dance Theatre of Harlem have traditionally garnered the lion's share of attention, says Blunden with characteristic candor. "It was very hard to get anything equal to that from funding sources or presenters, because—and they still feel this way—Ailey's a sure thing. But they need to give these other companies a try."

And why not? Owing to the Black Traditions project at the ADF, Dayton now boasts a repertory of great works by African-American choreographers that rivals that of any of the big New



Dayton Contemporary Dance Company in *The Stack-Up*. Choreography: Talley Beatty; Photo: J. Anderson

York-based companies. The company not only shares its repertory with audiences in performance, but also with other dancers in the studio. "Not only have we redone and recorded these works," says Blunden, "but we also have people in our company who can go out and set them on other groups."

Perhaps most important, though, is the opportunity Dayton's performances provide to set the record straight about the contributions African-American artists have made to the art form we call modern dance. "Dayton Contemporary represents a page of our history that's been missing far too long," says Waber.

Blunden agrees. "Just like there are 200,000 *Nutcrackers* in the world," she says, "there should be 200,000 *Rainbows*. I think these works are that important."

—David Gere

"WE OVER-SCHEDULED THE LADY. WE COULD NOT HAVE GIVEN MORE OF HERSELF."

On the first day of the Lewitzky Dance Company's month-long 1992 residency in Arizona, one of the company's dancers was rushed to the hospital for surgery. Bella Lewitzky continued unfazed, giving the people of Arizona nearly every waking hour of her time, as choreographer, teacher and advocate for the arts. She could not have done it, she insists, without the dedicated team of Arizonans who put the residency together.

Now in its third year, Arizona Dance On Tour (DOT) mobilized people and resources to give this residency unprecedented depth and coverage. Kathy Hotchner, director of programs for the Scottsdale Center for the Arts, had a theater that was unused in the summer; she had long wanted to do something with Lewitzky to improve the quality of local dance in Arizona. Working with the Arizona Commission on the Arts (ACA), she developed a DOT proposal that made it happen.

The Scottsdale Center, the ACA and Ballet Arizona were partners in this wide-ranging collaboration. The Center paid the commissioning fee for a new work and provided space and staff time. The ACA organized the multifaceted event. Donors public and private, artistic and commercial contributed. The Safari Resort donated housing for the month. Thousands of citizens were exposed to the varied resources represented by an experienced dance company with a composer (Larry Attaway) and a lighting designer (Darlene Neel) in residence.

Ballet Arizona, on whom Lewitzky set the new work, offered in-kind services. "They let us haul their dance floor around town; they learned the new work and will take it into their repertoire," observed Mollie Lakin-Hayes, touring/community development director at the ACA. "The ballet dancers are very different, physically, from the Lewitzky company. They got the word out, their board was involved, everyone worked toward the same goal. There was no feeling of competition."

"Michael Uthoff, the new director of Ballet Arizona, was interested in having my work available to his company," says Lewitzky. "The ballet dancers came to take class; some of them had never *seen* modern dance before." Of Ballet Arizona's experience with Lewitzky, Uthoff said, "I know the dancers who had the opportunity to work with Bella are totally different artists, in a positive way. A couple of them had no experience of working in a contemporary style, and wanted to be pretty ballerinas. After that experience, they discovered a totally new way of communicating. Their whole sense of humanity was different."

"Bella loves to talk," laughs Claire West, the ACA's performing arts director. "She just transfixes everybody: legislators, boards of directors, the general public. Our goals were to increase audiences for dance throughout the state; we decided to do it by focusing on Scottsdale, to have an excellent dance company in residence

WHO

Lewitzky Dance
Company

Arizona
Commission
on the Arts

WHAT

Month-Long
Outreach/Creative
Residency

WHEN

July, 1992

WHERE

Scottsdale Center
for the Arts

Ballet Arizona

DOT Funds

\$35,000

Lewitzky Dance
Company

Arizona
Commission
on the Arts

for a month, doing audience development and education activities. We opened her company class to public viewing every day; she'd spend 15 minutes at the end addressing questions. We involved classroom teachers, dance teachers, dancers, visual artists. Between 20 and 70 people turned up each day. Bella went to lunch with Arizonans for Cultural Development, the Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the ACA's Board of Directors, the Business Volunteers for the Arts and major corporate contributors. She talked about her art to them, and they were fascinated. A lot of them returned for the final concerts."

"It was a dream residency," commented Lewitzky a few months later between her month in Scottsdale and a December swing through rural Arizona to Lake Havasu City, Yuma, Safford, Prescott and Page to prepare presenters in these communities for another DOT project with her company in 1993. "It included the commissioning of a new piece, which is the ultimate luxury. Usually when you take time to make new work, it's unpaid time, expensive time. New work is a basic necessity."

The new work, *Episode #3: The Outsider*, premiered at the Scottsdale Cultural Center, attracting an audience of 600 people, "which in Arizona in July is amazing," according to West. The dance explored the feelings of a newcomer to American culture. "The lead dancer is trained in Chinese classical dance," recalls Lakin-Hayes.

"She showed how it felt to be overlooked, looked through, not really accepted. She resolved that her individuality was really important."

Lewitzky and her dancers tour extensively every year, so the opportunity to stay in one place for several weeks was a blessing. "Most of our touring is hit-and-run; all you see is the hotel and the theater. Here we got to see the city, to walk around, to rest. We worked with the community, invited people at every opportunity. Larry [Attaway] and I made ourselves available at lunchtime. We talked with anyone the Scottsdale team thought was important: funders, corporate people, artists in the community. We opened the process of our work to the public. My dancers taught community classes. It was a chock-a-block full schedule, by all accounts highly successful—one of the things you hope will happen."

It didn't just *happen*. West and Lakin-Hayes at the ACA, and Hotchner at the Scottsdale Cultural Council mobilized a large number of volunteers to shepherd Lewitzky's company.

"The Lewitzky Company also did a lecture-demonstration at the Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix," where reports West, "those who attended got a very up-close-and-personal experience in a rehearsal room. We held master classes for children, teens and adults in the West Valley, which is heavily Hispanic, Native American and Black. Bella offered a Craft of Choreography seminar, free to professional choreogra-

phers from all over the state, which drew artists working in Native American and Flamenco modes as well as ballet and modern. The final presentation of their work drew an audience of 200. The classes for professional and intermediate dancers had waiting lists as long as my arm."

A Dance Production Weekend, led by Darlene Neel and Attaway, attracted 41 people overall. It drew designers, composers, people interested in getting into arts management as well as the staffs of Arizona dance companies. "Bella also did a workshop for boards of directors. She was interviewed on the radio, on television, in the newspaper. We overscheduled the lady. She could not have given more of herself."

These were the longest days of the year, from mid-June to mid-July. "We hit 100, 105 degrees during the day," observes Lakin-Hayes. "Luckily, Scotts-



Bella Lewitzky. Photo: John Blackmer

dale Center is air-conditioned." And luckily Bella Lewitzky, a native of the California desert, flourishes in the heat.

Oh, and the dancer who had surgery is fine.

—Elizabeth Zimmer

Lewitzky Dance
Company

Arizona
Commission
on the Arts

“THEY DON’T KNOW THE NAMES OF THE COMPANIES, BUT NOW THEY ASK FOR MODERN DANCE.”

WHO

Garth Fagan Dance

Kansas Arts
Commission

Various Presenters

WHAT

Performance/
Outreach Residency

WHEN

April, 1992

WHERE

Various sites,
Kansas

DOT Funds

\$25,000

In Kansas, where modern dance can seem almost as foreign as Oz, Dance On Tour coordinator Monique Pittman-Lui knew she could get the audience for Garth Fagan Dance Company on their feet—if only she could get them in the hall.

“Modern dance is not the main thing here in Kansas,” says Pittman-Lui, who was hired by the Topeka Performing Arts Center specifically to oversee the Fagan company’s two-week Dance On Tour residency. “Ballet, of course, is popular, and Kansas City is big on jazz,” she says, noting that east Kansas is “very cosmopolitan.” But modern dance? The owners of some private dance studios—a prime target of the residency’s master classes—were so skeptical that many refused even to tell their students that Fagan’s modern dance company was in town.

In choosing to bring modern dance to populations largely unfamiliar with this most American of art forms, the tour’s six east Kansas presenters—Emporia Arts Council, Topeka Performing Arts Center, University of Kansas Concert Series, Kansas State University McCain Series, Wichita Park Alliance and Johnson Community College—knew they were choosing a tough road. But, given prior experience of Fagan’s artistry—the company performed successfully at the Kansas University Concert Series in Lawrence in 1989—they felt sure they could overcome any intransigence. In large measure, they did.

“People were touched here by Garth Fagan Dance,” says Pittman-Lui,

“whether they talked to the dancers, saw the dance, heard the music or received the messages that were embedded in the choreography. They got standing ovations everywhere they went, whether for residencies, performances or lecture-demonstrations. So we learned a lot about modern dance and really furthered the cause of modern dance in Kansas.”

Perseverance and good organization proved to be key.

In Topeka, for instance, the local tour coordinators found their community strikingly resistant to hosting dance “outsiders” from Rochester, New York. Invitations to master classes were sent to dance studios, drill teams and a Hispanic ballet troupe, but the lack of response seemed to reflect a marked antipathy to modern dance as an art form. “Some ballet teachers complained that the Garth Fagan dancers don’t wear shoes, which would hurt their dancers,” recalls Pittman-Lui. “I think they were afraid of losing their students.”

Ultimately, however, several members of Justicia, the city’s ballet folklórico, did enroll in the master classes and became so enthusiastic about Fagan’s work that they attended every public performance, bringing along family members and becoming avid fans of the troupe. Also in Topeka, the volunteer coordinators overcame initial resistance to build support for a highly successful lecture-demonstration for 2,800 school children by bringing together students from four different school districts. The project is now seen as a model for how districts can work together.

"Our site coordinators here in Topeka were almost camping out on people's doors to get that response," says Pittman-Lui, who attributes the residency's many visible successes to the commitment of community presenters who invested in the project with a "personal touch."

Not every residency was equally successful. In Wichita less than 100 people attended the residency activities, at a cost to the tour of \$5,000. Conversely, in Lawrence—a university town of 60,000—teachers at Central Junior High School took their own initiative to ask the Kansas Dance Network for a preview lecture and were subsequently amazed at the mature responses their students exhibited to Fagan's work.

"Generally speaking, you can't tell kids in grades 7–9 anything about performance or culture or art or anything," says Pittman-Lui with a laugh. "But they were not only orderly, they stamped and cheered and pounded on chairs at the end of the lecture-demonstration. The teachers said that had never happened before."

University of Kansas presenter Jacqueline Davis believes that the type of audience preparation provided at the junior high school is exactly what's necessary on a larger scale for modern dance to gain a stronger foothold in Kansas. Lacking such preparation, audiences tend to find modern dance obscure, she says.

"With modern dance, you go into the theater and you have to think,"



A Fagan Company master class at Johnson County Community College. Photo: Gary Becker.

says Davis, who has been presenting dance and music in Lawrence for nearly 15 years. "When you walk out of there, if you don't understand what happened, you feel stupid. And that is the crux of the problem nationwide: if people are feeling stupid, they're not going to want to come back."

After learning about modern dance via the educational opportunities provided by Kansas Dance On Tour, however, audiences seemed eager for a repeat encounter, says Pittman-Lui. In surveys following the Fagan residency, patrons of the Topeka Performing Arts Center expressed a desire to see modern dance again. "They don't know the names of the companies," she adds, "but now they write in 'modern dance.' "

—David Gere

Garth Fagan Dance

Kansas Arts
Commission

Various Presenters

“THERE’S A DISCIPLINE THAT

CARRIES OVER TO OTHER THINGS.”

At Pittsburgh’s Creative and Performing Arts High School (CAPA), “the dancers need as much exposure to professionals as they can get,” says Norma Jean Barnes. So the December, 1991 residency of Ballet Hispanico of New York, though it lasted only three days, meant a great deal to the CAPA students. The residency also touched students of the Frick Middle School, whose magnet curriculum is specialized in foreign languages, and the Advanced Spanish Literature class at Carnegie Mellon University.

Barnes is the residency coordinator for the Pittsburgh Dance Council (PDC), which sponsored the company’s visit. She planned the events with company representatives, and visited classrooms ahead of time to show a company video “so they’d know beforehand what they’d be seeing” and to instruct children in how to behave at a live theater performance. She also invited various university community groups to a Saturday afternoon open rehearsal of the company’s repertoire, which included the premiere of Graciela Daniele’s new work, *El Nuevo Mundo*, focusing on Columbus’s encounter with the Americas. A sexy, comic, punk rocker’s version of the journey across the Atlantic, it was shown in Pittsburgh a year before its New York premiere in late 1992.

Barnes was impressed with Tina Ramirez, Ballet Hispanico’s artistic director. “She’s a role model and a roots person, working in the community, reaching out to Hispanic youth

through dance. Even if a student doesn’t want to be a professional dancer, there’s a discipline that carries over to other things. Ballet Hispanico has a history of working in the community, and their lecture-demonstration was out of sight.”

“I taught them flamenco arms,” remembers Ramirez. “You use the same muscles in different techniques to produce movements; the intention changes the style. At the post-performance discussion, I found that the junior high school kids understood the Daniele work better than the adults; they saw the humor of the choreography. They got straight to the grain of what we were trying to do.”

The residency focused as much on the “Hispanico” in the company’s name as on the “Ballet.” Pittsburgh’s public school population is 55% African-American and 45% “other,” including many newly arrived Russian immigrants. The percentage of Hispanics is relatively small, so the opportunity was seized both to expose everyone to an authentic manifestation of Latin American culture, and to reinforce that culture for members of the Hispanic community.

“While contemporary work is still our focus,” says Carolelinda Dickey, executive director of the PDC, “we have an ongoing commitment to bring in work of three general cultural groups: Hispanic, Asian and African-American. This can include traditional, experimental and cross-disciplinary work. After discussion with Tina, who is classically trained, we

WHO

Ballet Hispanico
of New York

Mid Atlantic Arts
Foundation

Pittsburgh Dance
Council

WHAT

Performance/
Outreach Residency

WHEN

December, 1991

WHERE

Various sites,
Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania

DOT Funds

\$2,295

Ballet Hispanico
of New York

Mid Atlantic Arts
Foundation

Pittsburgh Dance
Council

realized that we would be able to show not only folk and flamenco, but also demonstrate that within the Hispanic culture there are many genres of work. It was important to her to be viewed and used as a classical company. And we were able to provide large chunks of time in the Fulton Theater, so the company could finish 'tech-ing' the work on stage. Dance On Tour makes the difference between my doing a one-night stand and doing a multi-day residency of this kind."

The 1,380-seat Fulton Theater was full for the Ballet Hispanico performance, with nearly 1,200 paid admissions and the rest of the seats filled with students. "A good third of the audience was Spanish-speaking, meaning that the residency was well-supported by the Hispanic community," says Dickey.

Partnerships with community organizations mean a great deal to the children at the Frick, that middle school where Ramirez, choreographer Daniele and the company members demonstrated and talked about their work. The school's location is almost a metaphor for the pressures upon it. It sits in an area called Oakland, in the middle of a triangle formed by Pittsburgh's African-American Hill District, the affluent Squirrel Hill and Shadyside suburbs and the University of Pittsburgh.

Community partnerships like this one between Frick and the Pittsburgh



Ballet Hispanico in *Cafe America*. Choreography: George Faison; Photo: Tom Brazil

Dance Council, which assists in its program to develop a dance curriculum with an exhaustive visiting artists program, can help assure that students from the Hill District who come to Frick have a range of experiences not unlike those available to its more affluent neighbors. The enriched curriculum encourages children to stay in school, increasing their chances for rewarding careers and adult lives. Immersion in dance experiences like the Ballet Hispanico of New York residency is basic to their multi-cultural, multi-disciplinary education.

—Elizabeth Zimmer

“PARTICIPATION IS WHERE PEOPLE LEARN MOST.”

Washington, DC-based choreographer Liz Lerman turns the whole concept of dance upside down, which is probably why her unconventional, boundary-busting work looks so at home in the independent-minded state of Maine.

“There are times when I’m quite happy to do an informal performance, incorporating how young and old, straight and gay, or black and white in my company dance together,” says Lerman, whose multi-generational, multi-ethnic Dance Exchange has been featured in such prestigious venues as Washington, DC’s Kennedy Center and Jacob’s Pillow in Lee, Massachusetts. “But I really think, in my heart of hearts, that participation is where people learn most. When people do it, it changes how they see what we do, but it also changes what they get to experience.

“It’s hard to talk about this without sounding really corny,” she adds, “but all of us in the company feel like people really are creative. If given the tools—not in a condescending or patronizing way—they can make sense out of their own lives. If we listen to them, it means something to them, whether they become artists or not.”

Lerman’s uniquely populist perspective—she’s been called “the ultimate democrat of dance”—made her the perfect choice for a two-week Dance On Tour (DOT) residency sponsored by the Maine Arts Commission. “Maine is an anomaly in New England,” explains Alden Wilson, director of the Maine Arts Commission.

“It’s five times bigger than the other states, but it’s sparsely populated. Portland, its largest city, has a population of only 65,000.”

“This is not the Kennebunkport of George Bush,” adds Margaret Gould Wescott, director of the Dance Program at the University of Maine—Farmington, one of the DOT presenters. On the contrary, says Wescott, Maine is a large state dotted with mostly poor rural communities, where alcohol, poverty, incest and other social problems are prevalent. Not surprisingly, dance presenters are few and the formal dance concert has limited applicability. Local artists are searching for a way to respond to the sense of fractured community, she says, and Lerman was brought in as a catalyst.

In the absence of a statewide dance service organization, the Maine Arts Commission coordinated the residency and served as financial guarantor. Each community was responsible for contributing a small portion of the budget. Wescott, for instance, put in \$2,000, an amount she collected from individuals in Farmington in the form of small donations.

More important than money, however, was each presenter’s ability to identify the people with whom Lerman might work. In Farmington, for instance, with a population of 6,000, Wescott identified 22 different organizations and school sites, which led to an extraordinary range of community involvement. For six days, Lerman and her dancers huddled with groups of older adults, the university

WHO

Liz Lerman/Dance
Exchange

Maine Arts
Commission

WHAT

Performance/
Outreach/Creative
Residency

WHEN

January, 1991

WHERE

University of Maine—
Farmington

Various sites,
Farmington, Maine

DOT Funds

\$15,000

dance company, high school theater students, elementary school students, a group of ministers, terminally ill hospital patients, incest survivors and a women's advisory group, culminating in a packed performance on campus.

"One of the neat things they did at that performance," says Wescott, "was to make a dance incorporating impressions of things they experienced in Farmington, like a bridge that was under construction and store windows that were closed after 5 p.m." (Farmington is "dead" at night, she explains with a laugh.) What's more, many in this predominantly white community were witnessing their first example of racial diversity. "Kids wrote letters afterward saying they liked the way the black man jumped. Boris, one of Liz's dancers, was probably the first black man they had ever seen."

One of Lerman's strongest memories of the Portland portion of the residency—which happened to coincide with the Desert Storm bombing of Iraq—was a performance featuring local women, many of whom had relatives in the military, sharing their thoughts about the Persian Gulf War. "Their willingness to stand up in their community and admit to their ambiguous feelings was really something," says Lerman, who facilitated the creation of the piece by asking the dancers to recall where they were when they heard about Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor. "I took that thematic structure home with me and we used it in a piece of our own."



Liz Lerman/Dance Exchange company members.
Photo: Philip Trager

Betsy Dunphy, an independent choreographer from South Portland who has followed Lerman's work for five years and incorporates multi-generational dancers in her own choreography, says that Lerman has an unusual ability to discover the common thread in a community, stitching it into a remarkably beautiful crazy quilt. "Physically, these people don't look like dancers," says Dunphy. "But they get up there and deliver a performance that is so personal. It comes from the deepest parts of individuals and gets distilled by the group into a shared group piece. It's not anything you have to grapple with to understand because it's coming from a common center. I like that."

—David Gere

AFTERWORD

So many images of dance. So many ways in which dancing happens, and so many ways in which dance builds community and makes bridges. These twelve stories about dance and partnerships featured by the Dance On Tour Program are only a tiny fraction of the many collaborations between dance artists, presenters, state arts agencies, regional arts organizations and hundreds of communities across America working together to bring excellence to the citizens of our land.

The profiles in *Moving Around* show us that Dance On Tour can work for the benefit of many, and demonstrate the critical leadership that the federal government can play in securing rich cultural experiences for a great variety of Americans. Yet the funding currently available through Dance On Tour is not sufficient to meet the need or the possibilities that dance companies and presenters can offer to American communities.

In an era when the arts world is characterized by the strength of our art forms and the fragility of our institutions, Dance On Tour suggests a new way of doing business which is built on partnerships and on the investments of talents, time and funds by many different players. How do we capitalize upon these models? What strategies will increase the visibility and resources for this program and for the audiences and artists it serves?

We have begun answering those questions by doing what people have always done: telling the stories. And imagining how many more stories lie ahead, with the support and resources needed. The challenge belongs to us all.

—Bonnie Brooks

MOVING



AROUND

THE NUMBERS: DISTRIBUTION OF DANCE ON TOUR PROJECTS

Regional Component (FY 1991-1993)



Key:

Number of Regional Engagements Supported
1991-1993

- 820 dance residencies
- 1,859 performances supported
- over 170 companies have participated
- 484 presenters participating

State Component (FY 1990 – 1993)



Key:

■ Grantees of the State Component
1990 – 1993

- 41 companies/artists have participated in state projects
- 19 states have conducted DOT projects
- over 220 communities have been served

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